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ABSTRACT

The potential of community education for building partnerships that help schools become the active agents for addressing social change is discussed in the five papers that make up this report. The first paper, by Donna Amstutz, presents an overview of the purposes and models of community education. Next, a paper by Monica Beglau discusses forms of parent/school/university partnerships that strengthen the school-community bond. Wyoming's statewide initiatives, the benefits of cooperative planning, and "how to's" for community involvement meetings are also described. Paper number 3, by Donna Whitson, identifies some of the community resources that are available to most school systems and specific resources for Wyoming schools. The fourth paper, by Dick Naumann, discusses methods for encouraging volunteers and the reasons for using them. Strategies to motivate schools to reflect community diversity are provided in the final chapter by Caroline Sherritt. A Wyoming State government reorganization chart is included. (Contains 40 references.) (LMI)

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Community Involvement in School Improvement

The New Generation of American Schools

EA 024 545

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Community Involvement in School Improvement

by

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Wyoming Center for Educational Research
College of Education
The University of Wyoming
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Why Community Education?

by Donna Amstutz

The reports of the failure of our schools have been frightening and on-going. Since A Nation at Risk was published in 1982, the educational system has been searching for ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our schools. Educators have been challenged to restore the lost public confidence in schools' abilities to educate our children. The universities and schools themselves have been asked to salvage the public school system. Community education has a major role to play in restoring our educational system by renewing the public's faith and by involving them in a variety of ways.

The school and the community are inextricably linked. The ethnic, social, and economic health of the community are reflected in the school. Over 30 years ago, Conant (1959) observed,

> The nature of the community largely determines what goes on in the school. Therefore, to attempt to divorce the school from the community is to engage in unrealistic thinking, which might lead to policies that could wreak havoc with the school and lives of children. The community and the school are inseparable.

John Dewey noted that the school represents society in miniature. In the 1950s, schools were thought to contain all of the resources needed to educate students. This resulted in the public coming to believe that valid learning took place only in formal settings. By the 1970s, the schools had taken on so many responsibilities that the division between the school and the community had widened. In 1978, the Community Schools and Comprehensive Community Education Act was enacted to provide the collaborative programs that were to coordinate social services, to make more efficient use of public school facilities, and to support the development

of community education programs. In the Statement of Findings and Policy, the Act declared:

1. the school is an integral part of the local human service delivery system;

2. the school is a primary institution for the delivery of services and may be the best instrument for the coordination of frequently fragmented services including benefits obtained by energy savings and parental involvement in the delivery of such services;

3. community education promotes a more efficient use of public education facilities through an extension of the school building and equipment;

4. as the primary educational institution of the community, the school is more effective when it involves the people of that community in a program to fulfill the educational needs of individuals of the community; and

5. community schools provide a great potential for the use of needs assessment as a basis for human resources policies.

Recognizing the limitations of the local school is the beginning of the community education process. Schools are limited, according to Melby (1978), because they:

1. are isolated from the community;

2. look inward and not outside the school;

3. have an exaggerated view of the role of the school in the child's education and fail to see how important the child's whole life is, including home and community; and

4. do not relate schooling to the problems of the real world.

Melby also noted that the parent and the citizen have lost their historic role in relationship to the school. The citizens of the community relinquished their authority and responsibilities to the school for a variety of reasons. As more women entered the work place, there was less time for them to devote to school and

community involvement. Instead of apprenticeships in industry, the schools were given more responsibility for vocational training. A sense of community that once fostered neighborhood links collapsed as geographic mobility increased. Schools were given social roles to play in integration and special services for the "disadvantaged." As technology increased, schools were asked to provide computer literacy. Bilingual, multicultural, and special education programs were mandated to be provided by the schools. As a result, the school and its teachers have been asked to increasingly take on the roles of parent, counselor, promoter of ethics and morals, career advisor, and disciplinarian. Staff, administrators, and teachers have struggled mightily to meet these roles that have traditionally been conducted in the community. The school has taken on increased responsibilities and tasks, not by restructuring their programs, but by adding on to them. Sex education, drug education, driver education, bilingual education, moral education and ethics have all been added on in expensive, and often largely ineffective, programs. Many parents no longer have a sense of community, so it is not surprising that their children do not have the close community ties they once did. But the lack of a community sense has primarily been demonstrated by parents who are uninvolved in the education of their children. Many have, indeed, delegated to the schools *in loco parentis* expecting the school to be parentally responsible for their children from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Parents who do wish to be involved have been unable to play any significant role in relation to public schools because of the often vast and insensitive educational bureaucracies that have become self-serving and defensive.

Community education attempts to reconcile the school with home and community. If parents and the community are partly responsible for educational

failure, then it follows that if schools are to improve, parents and communities have to become involved in the process . Community education is based on "an action orientation to build upon the mutually interdependent relationship between the home, the school, and the community" (Perspectives, p. 3). The involvement of parents in school settings has taken a variety of forms: classroom volunteers, parent advisory committees, and curriculum input councils. However, as a philosophical concept, parent and community involvement goes far beyond these structured methods. It "transforms our idea of education from a narrow view of schooling to a much broader view of continual life-long learning. All aspects of the community are recognized as a source and active agent in the education of people" (Warden, 1978, p. 78). Community education uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems.

While some schools have begun an integrating process by unlocking the doors to the school in the afternoon and at night so that adults and youth can come in for learning and recreation, they have not unlocked the doors during the daytime hours so that children can come out into the community to learn what they cannot readily learn in the schoolroom. The community is a vast repository of learning opportunities for children. Some educators have recognized this with the establishment of "adopt-a-school" programs that attempt to bring the real world to students through mentors and work-day experiences. Field trips into the community and expertise of citizens are occasionally brought into the classroom. But the concept of community education goes beyond these "add-on" experiences for children. Getting the majority of teachers and parents to understand the principles of community education may be the next step.

Models of Community Education

To get a global view of what is involved in community education, three models are worth examination. Each attempts to incorporate facets of the community in the design of educational experiences. Minzey's (1978) model lists six basic components of community education:

1. education for school age children - the traditional program offered by all school districts from kindergarten through high school completion;

2. use of community facilities - school buildings should become the focal point for community activities, services, and recreation;

3. additional programs for school age children - enrichment, remedial, and supplemental educational activities as well as recreational, cultural, and avocational activities after school and year-round;

4. programs for adults - typically including adult basic education, high school completion, recreational, avocational, cultural, and vocational experiences;

5. delivery and coordination of community services - the school serves as a broker, relating problems to resources and making referrals to the appropriate services located either within the school or at another location; and

6. community involvement - helps citizens identify local problems and develop the process for attempting to solve such problems through a community school council whose membership is based on community representation and two-way communication.

Minzey (1978) noted that the majority of schools, however, only conduct the day program for children. Most schools that have incorporated some community education usually only offer phases one through four in the model above. This assumes that community education is primarily about programs. In order to accomplish community education's objectives, phases five and six of Minzey's model need to be implemented through a more process oriented approach.

Totten's (1970) model includes the potential outcomes of community

education. His model specifically includes agencies, organizations, places and people who contribute to the school's effectiveness.

Totten's model is related to the power of community education to enhance a community's potential. He believes that community education has the power to,

1) influence the placement of authority for the educative process into the proper hands (the community which includes the school's personnel and the parents);

2) improve the profession of education through a shift in values and reformed teacher preparation;

3) bring about curriculum change;

4) influence the construction of school facilities;

5) raise the values held for education;

6) bring about understanding among people through participation, leadership development, communication, and human relations;

7) strengthen the work of volunteer agencies;

8) improve economic conditions;

9) reduce waste and more effectively utilize resources; and

10) raise the cultural tone of the community.

While perhaps overly optimistic in nature as it relates to the outcomes, Totten's model clearly shows the breadth of involvement and the social implications of community involvement.

Fantini proposed four overlapping models of community education. The elements of the community, in his view, include: school, libraries, self-help groups, institutions of higher learning, industry, human service agencies, agricultural extension, adult education, the military, health organizations, and citizens' groups.

Type One: Division of Labor. Each separate agency within the community performs a separate function in socializing and educating youth. Control and accountability rested with the parents and the church. Libraries taught patrons how to use their services; industry taught young adults how to perform on the job; agricultural extension agents taught youth how to produce better crops and farm more profitably; church leaders taught morals; health organizations taught nutrition and the value of exercise; citizen's groups taught participation in a democratic society. The school taught reading, writing, and computation skills.

Type Two: Delegation of Labor Model. The industrial revolution produced rapid changes in the economic, political, and cultural structures, thereby changing the relationships of community institutions. As community agencies, that once functioned as educators, delegated their power and tasks to the school, the school's roles and responsibilities were greatly enlarged. Decisions about who learns, what should be learned, and when, where, and how learning takes place were controlled by the schools and school professionals.

Type Three: A Coordinative Model. The back-to-the-basics movement has assisted in the school's returning responsibility for some aspects of education to the community and delegating some educational services to other agencies and institutions in the community. This coordinated system involves sharing responsibilities and establishment and maintenance of cooperative programs. In this model, "the curriculum in the school emphasizes the basics and learning how to learn so that students may then go outside the school and benefit from the other educative environments and opportunities" (Kaplan and Warden, 1978). This model requires flexible structures and programs and assumes expanded parental roles.

Type Four: A Facilitative Model. In this model, the parents and professional educators work cooperatively to help students assemble their own individualized learning environments in self-directed situations. The professional educator relinquishes direct delivery of most educational services to other educative agents in the community but is accountable for assuring the quality of the individual's learning environments and experiences. The educational options are as extensive and diverse as the contemporary society. The school, instead of expecting all families to adjust to a standardized pattern, will function as a facilitator, looking for resources available in the immediate and global environment.

Most educators believe that the current school system rests between Fantini's types two and three. Some schools, particularly in rural areas, have not moved beyond type one. The development of schools that reflect the type four model will require substantial changes in schools, teachers, and community residents. But moving from a delegation of labor model to a coordinative model is a step in the right direction.

These models are illustrative of just a few of the ways in which community education is conceived by educators. These models suggest alternative ways in which education can become relevant for the students and the community. Traditional school programs have been criticized for out-dated instructional methodology and content. Community education programs have won praise for their response to community programs and to their relevance to life today. Programs that have garnered positive attention include: instituting a parent's room in each school so parents feel welcome; operating day care centers and "latchkey" programs; development of human resource centers in schools affected by declining K-12

enrollment; advisory councils; volunteers in the schools; fostering community action groups; enrichment classes taught by community members; summer programs for youth; public use of school libraries; police liaison programs; community surveys; cooperative agreements between recreation, social service, and other community agencies; having satellite centers for public assistance, housing, and nutrition programs within the school; using business and industry to provide vocational experiences; using retirement or nursing homes as places for student volunteer opportunities; and providing space for family literacy programs.

Community schools are those in which creativity and flexibility are encouraged. New ways of conceiving education, in response to new societal patterns, are emerging in these schools. For example, community schools emphasize:

*learning processes as opposed to teaching processes

*flexible learning situations as opposed to rigidly scheduled units

*creativity as opposed to rote memorization

*tolerance for ambiguity as opposed to seeking one right answer

*process as opposed to product

*innovation as opposed to stability and the status quo

*entrepreneurship as opposed to accommodation of the bureaucracy

*free flow of information as opposed to hierarchial control of information

*individualization as opposed to standardization

*cooperation as opposed to competition

The situation in schools currently is to accept the present form, function, and

organization of schooling as an absolute. Unfortunately, the present school structure is increasingly not fitting the society in which we live or in which we are going to live in the future. Industry has been leading the way in curricular reform, in part, because they have moved to management strategies that require the kind of learning promoted in community education. Business reports are calling for employees who demonstrate effective collaborative skills, not competitive ones; creative thinking skills, not standard answers to standard questions; understanding of complex inter-relationships, not closed into one mode of thinking; facility with a variety of technologies, not dependent on out-of-date skills; and communication skills, not satisfying only one's own desires (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U.S. Department of Labor, June, 1991).

While meeting the needs of business for a new kind of employee, community education can also attend to the social, recreational, political, and cultural needs of a community. These outcomes are as important in conducting adult roles in the diverse society in which we live as are the outcomes for potential workers.

The following chapters are intended to provide a glimpse of specific ways in which community education can be implemented if educators can open their systems to change. Chapter Two discusses forms of parent/school/university partnerships that strengthen the bond between community and school. Chapter Three identifies some of the community resources that are available to most school systems and specific resources for schools in Wyoming. In Chapter Four methods for encouraging volunteers and reasons for using them are discussed. Chapter Five discusses strategies to encourage schools to be more inclusive in reflecting community diversity in the schools.

This initial discussion of the potential of community eduction to forge partnerships so that schools become the active agent for addressing changes in society is an overview of some possibilities. There are other areas that need to be addressed. At the conclusion of this book is a bibliography that can be of assistance in finding additional information about community education. Teachers in particular should be the organizing force in initiating a community education program. While resistance from administration and from peers who are caught in an unproductive school model can be strong, those teachers who have the best interests of children at heart will at least examine the concepts of community education with an eye towards improving their own practice.

Cooperative Educational Planning

by Monica Beglau

The involvement of the entire community in the planning of education is a complicated and challenging attempt to involve interested parties in the restructuring and reform of education. Traditional public values which placed education and the planning of educational experiences in the hands of school boards and professional educators have changed over the past years. Election Day exit polls in 1990 placed "the decrepitude of the nation's education system" as the top domestic concern of voters. Involvement is essential given the public's expectations of education, the amount of public funds invested in education, and the historic transition noted by Boyer in Finn (1991), "...for the first time America is more preoccupied with national results than with local school control" (p. 68).

Public interest in education began to grow significantly with the publicity surrounding such high profile publications as A Nation At Risk and others which documented the mediocre state of education in the country as a whole. Another concern raised was the state of education in the United States relative to other nations. Parents, business leaders, community members, and taxpayers' groups began to develop a more active interest in the planning and management of education in their communities.

With some notable exceptions, however, most communities have continued business as usual in terms of educational planning. Chicago Public Schools, deemed "the worst" in the nation by former Education Secretary William Bennett, launched far-reaching and provocative changes in their school systems with the abolishment of typical school boards and the creation of school councils to run each of the city's

many individual schools. These school councils are composed of equal numbers of teachers, parents, and community representatives. The councils have the ultimate authority over the school, including the hiring and firing of the principal of the school. Finn (1990) noted that since the new councils have just taken effect in early 1990, it is too soon to tell how effective they are or, indeed, if they will make any lasting changes in the achievement levels of students or the effectiveness of schools. Political and managerial concerns, along with a predictable lawsuit filed by a principals' organization, have slowed the actual work of the school councils. Obviously those who administer schools do not necessarily see community involvement in a totally positive light.

Wyoming's Initiatives

Wyoming is developing state-wide initiatives to increase citizen involvement in all schools. The Wyoming School-University Partnership has been developing models for community involvement in educational planning through the establishment of Centers for Teaching and Learning in each of its fifteen-member districts.

The Centers for Teaching and Learning will provide a K-12 experience for pre-service teacher education students as they participate in more intensive and extensive practicum experiences in their professional preparation programs than was previously available. They will also provide sites for the renewal of the current corps of educators by serving to demonstrate the most effective teaching practices known to the profession. The Centers are governed by a District Council composed of teachers, parents, board members, administrators, University faculty, and business and community members. The Councils have been formed in many of the partner districts and are actively engaged in the decision-making processes which will

determine the sites for the Centers, teaching staff, innovative emphases, and many other governance issues.

Each Center will become a true "community of learners" with the fundamental foci of inquiry and renewal, research, and staff development. The Centers are professional development schools based on research by the Holmes Group and others to provide for improvement of the preparation and professional development of teachers, research directed at the continuous improvement of school practice, and most importantly, enhancement of public school student achievement.

As the District Councils have struggled with the decisions they must make to establish a Center in their district, some predictable and unpredictable occurrences have taken place. The level of collaboration and team building that preceded any concrete decisions was higher and took longer than many groups estimated it would take. Putting aside individual and small group agendas and working towards common goals was as difficult as determining and defining common goals of the larger group. The temptation to circumvent the process and make unilateral decisions had to be carefully avoided by those in the group who traditionally held positions of power and authority. Everything from the time and place of District Council meetings to the leadership of the councils had to be negotiated in each of the Partner districts. The negotiations themselves served to preface the work of the councils and to begin the difficult task of realizing the benefits of involving the Council in the educational planning of the Center for Teaching and Learning. These benefits have been summarized by Erickson and Gmelch in Minelga (1988):

Benefits of Cooperative Planning

1. Everyone understands and accepts decisions better. Any interest an individual may have is given a chance to be heard.

2. Participants are involved and have ownership to that they identify more closely with decisions. This commitment results in greater support during the implementation phase.

3. Participation increases motivation. The group recognizes that its efforts will be rewarded. They know that a lack of effort will lead to negative results.

4. Participation in group processes meets individual needs. Self-esteem, achievement, and autonomy are all nurtured and developed.

5. Increased understanding is a product of participation. This creates a freedom for modification and change when needed. The participants have a common knowledge base and are able to understand the details of the project better than those who have not participated in the processes.

6. Group decisions that lead to a legitimate, implemented plan create a group unity. There is an identification of participants with both processes and products. An added benefit is that the group will be a built-in support system encouraging others to accept or at least comply with the plan.

7. Group participation promotes team cooperation. Cooperation leads to trust in relationships, mutual understanding, and communication in solving problems. A supportive, enabling environment results.

8. Joint decisions can result in staff and administrative consensus. Conflicts may dissipate as formerly differing objectives become common to all participants.

9. Participation utilizes community expertise. As individuals contribute their talents and skills, better decisions can be made.

Practical "How To's" for Community Involvement Meetings

From a practical standpoint, there are a number of considerations that members of the District Councils have found helpful in organizing meetings and may serve helpful to other districts interested in developing the process of community involvement in educational planning. Merely inviting parents and other community members to attend educational planning meetings is seldom enough to generate the kind of dialogue critical to making some of the changes needed to re-structure schools.

Prior to actual meetings, the superintendent or individual designated to be responsible for initiating the process should consider the individuals who will be involved and the interest they will bring to the meeting. If possible, the seating arrangements and introductory activities should begin to involve people with others with whom they do not normally have contact. When teachers huddle in one corner, parents in another, school administrators and community leaders gather in yet another, the prospects of achieving group interaction and consensus are immediately limited and improbable. The participants should have as much information regarding the topic of the meeting as possible beforehand, at least five to seven days. The handouts should be concise and convey in "executive summary" style the concepts under consideration. If the purpose of the initial meeting is to consider the identification of goals, the change process, or student needs in the district, then the preparatory materials should provide an adequate level of information so that all participants can feel some level of comfort in discussion. Starting the meeting on time, having appropriate refreshments, and meeting in a flexible room where both large and small groups can function are standard considerations. Name tags and introductions help participants to move more rapidly into interaction and participation. An agenda should be prepared and circulated to participants with one of the preliminary items being a brief discussion of the style and purpose of the meeting.

The group leader(s) should take the time to assess feelings and understanding levels of participants in informal and non-threatening ways, particularly in small group sessions or during breaks. The leader(s) should convey through their behavior that participants are respected and their contributions to the meeting are valued.

Listening, encouraging, responding, linking, clarifying, supporting, and offering feedback are important behaviors for the leader(s) to practice during the meeting. The leader(s) should also check for any domination within small or large groups and work for balanced contribution amongst members. Thanking the participants for their attendance and observing agreed upon time limits are important ways to bring closure to each meeting of the group. Summarizing the work completed with a brief projection of the next meeting's agenda is also in order when completing the meeting.

It is critical that the leader(s) follow up any contacts made during the meeting, giving participants a further chance to discuss matters which came up during the session. Assessing feelings about the meeting and obtaining feedback from participants on suggestions for improving the next meeting are also important follow-up steps. The leader(s) should also make sure to complete any agreed-upon actions which resulted from the meeting. Providing each participant with a copy of minutes or any other product from the meeting will help to maintain interest and provide a sense of continuity from one meeting to the next.

Fiske (1991) detailed the shared decision-making and decentralization efforts undertaken in a number of school systems across the nation. He noted that in some schools the initial reaction of teachers was to see the move as a "power grab." He noted, "...after commandeering the photocopying machine and getting rid of the hated green paint on the walls of the lunchroom, the management team starts to think in broader terms, assuming an overall sense of responsibility for the school" (p. 57). In a similar vein, Fiske discussed the concept that the significance of overhauling the American public education system of governance lies not in what it guarantees but in what it makes possible.

The involvement of the community in educational planning may take some unexpected turns. School administrators should be prepared to hear recommendations which may require considerable change in the operation of schools. Community members may require some careful preparation regarding their role in the change process and the overall direction of school restructuring. Schools may even find themselves "going backwards" before they begin to make progress forwards with this type of community involvement, however, the ultimate result of increased ownership in the operation of public schools and the shared decision-making which goes beyond the typical school board involvement will serve to improve the educational programs of schools.

Identification of Community Resources: How These Resources May Fit Within the Education System

by Donna Whitson

The Community is a Teacher...All Resources in the Community are Viewed as Potential Forces and Factors. (Hiemstra, 1972)

If we define a resource as a source of support or help, then community resources can encompass a variety of organizations, agencies, and institutions. Even the smallest community may discover it has a rich array of resources upon which to build or support a communication education program. In fact, those community resources may well become the heart of the program. In an educative community, Hiemstra (1972) maintained that the community is a teacher of all the people who live there and that all resources in the community are viewed as potential forces and factors.

The role the groups or individuals play in a community education program depends on the community. Educators should survey the community resources within their own locations to determine the immediate players in each individual location. The connection to education may not at first be apparent in many resources, but the innovative community education coordinator will probably be surprised at the connections that can be made and the resources available, both material and human.

As examples of some of the possible resources in a community which can become involved in a community education program, this chapter will look at the following entities:

*Museums

*Churches/religious organizations

*Community/service organizations

*Business and industry

*Social service/health care providers

*Federal/state agencies

*Cooperative extension

*Libraries

Museums

A sometimes overlooked resource in the community is the local museum. Museums vary in their philosophies about their role as "educators" from those who see themselves as only collection and preservation experts to those which provide extensive educational programming aimed at lifelong learning experiences. As many other information/education providers, museum professionals have debated their educational role over the past few years and as a result, educational programming has been enhanced in most cases. Under the label "museum" may be included zoos, botanical gardens, art galleries, science and technology centers, historical collections and any number of other specialized collections.

People and Exhibits are Resources for Teaching

While not every community has a Smithsonian, most Wyoming counties have a collection of artifacts housed locally and open to the public at some time. While some are staffed by a professional, many depend on knowledgeable volunteers who have personal experiences with the local history and usually have contacts to a local network of history buffs. Both the people and exhibits are resources for teaching. Perhaps special volunteer projects involving students could be initiated to the benefit of students and the museum. Everything from working as docents to cataloging materials could be possible projects. A contact with museum personnel could evoke many ideas.

Wyoming is fortunate to have a number of specialized museums also. Even

if they are not located in your community, they can still be valuable sources of information and expertise. For additional information contact the Wyoming Parks and Cultural Resources Division/Museums and Historic Sites at 777-7014 in the State Department of Commerce, 2301 Central Avenue, Barrett Building, Cheyenne 82002. The Division of Parks and Cultural Resources publishes the Wyoming Museum and Gallery Directory which lists galleries, museums, Wyoming historical places, and archeological sites listed by region and city. Additional information can be obtained from the following state agencies.

Department of Commerce
Barrett Building
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-6303

Archives, Museums, & Hist. Dept.
Barrett Building
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, Wy 82002
(307) 777-7013

Economic Dev. & Stabilization Board
Herschler Building, 3 East
122 West 25th
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7284

Wyoming Council on the Arts
Kendrick Building
2320 Capital Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7742

Wyoming Highway Department
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-4484

Wyoming Recreation Commission
Barrett Building
2301 Central Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7695

Travel Commission
Interstate Highway 25 at College Drive
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7777

County historical societies can also provide local resources. The following list contains contact persons for all Wyoming chapters:

WSHS County Chapter Presidents
(As of January 23, 1992)

Albany CHS: Walter Edens, 1814 Park, Laramie, WY 82070

Big Horn CHS: Lynnette Cook, Rt. 1, Box 138, Rairden Ln., Worland, WY 82401

Campbell CHS: Myra Spellman, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2461, Gillette, WY 82717-2461

Carbon CHS: Joan Lawrence, P.O. Box 942, Rawlins, WY 82301-0942

Converse CHS: Lawrence Prager, P.O. Box 537, Douglas, WY 82633-0537

Crook CHS: John Moline, Rural Route, Aladdin, WY 82710

Fremont CHS: Maggie Layton, Box 16-River Lane, Riverton, WY 82501

Ft. Bridger Historical Assn: Sherone Taylor, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 112, Ft. Bridger, WY 82933-0112

Goshen CHS: Darlene Splitgerber, 112 Cottonwood Est., Torrington, WY 82240

Hot Springs CHS: Mara Nations, P.O. Box 689, Thermopolis, WY 82443-0689

JH Museum & Teton CHS: Jack Richards, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1005, Jackson, WY 83001-1005

Johnson CHS: Patty Myers, 68 Upper Clear Creek Rd., Buffalo, WY 82834

Laramie CHS: Mary Nystrom, 6800 Willshire Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82009

Lincoln CHS: Glen W. Morris, 1321 Sorenson Dr., Kemmerer, WY 83101

Moorcroft Historical Society (Crook County): Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 497, Moorcroft, WY 82721-0497

Natrona CHS: Kathy Orr, 4095 E. 8th, Casper, WY 82609 (1992-1994)

Niobrara CHS: Mrs. Vernon Chard, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1396, Lusk, WY 82225-1396

Park CHS: Bud Wells, 3102 Northfork Hwy., Wapiti, WY 82450; Chapter Mailing Address: Archives Center, 1002 Sheridan Ave., Cody, WY 82414

Platte CHS: Tom Eisenhauer, 148 Orchard Rd., Wheatland, WY 82201

Sheridan CHS: Verne Robinson, 226 W. Works, Sheridan, WY 82801

Star Valley HS (Lincoln County): Forrest W. Kennington, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1212, Afton, WY 83110-1212

Sweetwater CHS: Ruth Lauritzen, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25, Green

River, WY 82935-1212

Washakie CHS: Ray Menke, Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 292, Worland, WY 82401-0292

Weston CHS: Steve Berdahl, 248 E. Warwick, Newcastle, WY 82701

Churches/Religious Institutions

Churches and religious institutions fulfill specific religious educational roles as defined by their individual denominations and congregations. Aside from religious education, many participate in community programs for literacy, counseling, leadership activities, and a variety of other programs. These professionally trained religious educators may have expertise or materials which could be shared and applicable to the entire community. Many churches make their facilities available to nonreligious groups for activities or classes. Resources about ethnic or culturally diverse populations may also be available through the church/religious institution network. Check the telephone directory for churches in your community.

Community/Service/Social Organizations

Every community has social service organizations of which many have an educational component as part of their mission. An informal survey or a short visit with the local chamber of commerce should supply a list of groups organized and operating in your community. Besides the wealth of expertise in the membership, many of these organizations have formal educational programs involving the local community. Teachers and community educators may be surprised at the possibilities made available from a personal contact with these groups to explore mutual interests. In addition to scholarships, grants and awards given by many associations, the service and awareness components of their programs may be beneficial. A personal contact

can be followed up by paying attention to reports of the associations' activities in the local paper.

The following is a partial listing of some of the civic, service, and social associations which may be active in your community:

*Elks

*General Federation of Women's Clubs

*Jaycees

*Lions' clubs

*Optimists

*Rotary International

*Soroptomists

*Toastmasters

*VFW

Additional information concerning local groups can be obtained from the chamber of commerce in your area.

Wyoming Chambers of Commerce

Afton	Box 1097	83110	886-3810
Buffalo	55 N. Main	82834	684-5544
Casper	500 N. Center	82601	234-5311
Cheyenne	301 W. 16th	82001	638-3388
Cody	826 Sheridan	82414	587-2297
Douglas	318 1st St. W.	82633	358-2950
Dubois	Box 632	82513	455-2556
Evanston	36 10th St.	82930	789-2757

Fremont County	Box 10, Rt 614	82520	332-5011
Gillette	314 S. Gillette	82716	682-3673
Glenrock	217 W. Birch	82637	436-2754
Green River	1450 Uinta	82935	875-5711
Greybull	527 1st Ave. S.	82426	765-2100
Hulett	133 Main	82720	467-5220
Jackson Hole	532 N. Cache	83001	733-3316
Kemmerer	700 Cedar	83101	877-9761
Lander	160 N. 1st	82520	332-3892
Laramie	800 S. 3rd	82070	745-7339
Lovell	336 Nevada	82431	548-7552
Lusk	232 S. Main	82225	334-3132
Lyman	Box 1506	82937	787-3229
Medicine Bow	Box 456	82329	379-2255
Meeteetse	Box 38	82433	868-2278
Newcastle	710 Washington	82701	746-2705
Pinedale	32 E. Pine	82941	367-2242
Powell	111 S. Day	82435	754-3494
Rawlins	511 W. Spruce	82301	324-4111
Riverton	1st & Main	82501	856-4801
Rock Springs	1897 Dewar	82901	362-3771
Saratoga	114 S. First	82331	326-8855
Sheridan	5th & I-90	82801	672-2485
Shoshoni	Box 324	82649	876-2389

Sundance	309 Main	82729	283-1611
Thermopolis	220 Park	82443	864-3192
Torrington	350 W. 21st	82240	532-3879
Wheatland	600 9th	82201	322-2322
Worland	120 N. 10th	82401	347-3226

Business and Industry

Business and industry can contribute a great deal to community education. Most companies are primarily interested in employee training/learning, but the community at large can benefit also. Programs providing family involvement are becoming more commonplace. Career development and human resource development are mutual interests of educators and industry.

Contact Your Local Business and Industry to See What Resources are Available

Companies often sponsor recreational/sporting activities and teams for non-employees. In recent years special programs and partnerships between education and business have provided education with guest speakers and resource experts, tutoring programs, and even equipment and classrooms. While the intent of business may initially be public relations or marketing, significant contributions are made to the learning community.

Although Wyoming is not a highly industrialized state, a number of large companies are present in many communities and resources are also available locally through small businesses. The chamber of commerce should be able to provide a list of local businesses.

Social Service/Health Care Providers

An integral part of all communities are the social service and health care

providers. Many hospitals employ an education coordinator. Call your local hospital to visit with them about resources available. They have experts who may be willing to speak or provide information on health care concerns to students, parents and faculty, sponsor joint workshops, provide career information, hospital tours, etc.

Closely related to health care are human services agencies working in the community. Mental health centers, nursing homes, preschools, and daycare centers, county/city jails, youth crisis centers, the American Red Cross, senior citizen centers, etc. have offices in local communities. Any of these groups may be interested in co-sponsoring educational/informational programming, providing tours or speakers, and working with educators in a variety of creative ways. The key to unlock this resource treasure is to ask!

State and Federal Agencies

With fewer than 500,000 people spread over nearly 98,000 square miles, Wyoming is essentially one big community. In that sense, many of the federal and state agencies can be viewed as "community" resources. The technology available now and in the immediate future allows human resources and information to become readily available around the state in a variety of technological formats.

A good introduction to Wyoming state resources is the Wyoming Official Directory published each year by the Secretary of State's Office. The directory provides names, addresses and telephone numbers for Wyoming and U.S. legislators and all state government officials and agencies. The following chart represents the organization of state government as of 1991. Although continuing reorganization will mandate changes, the graphic is a good representation of state agencies. The chart has been reprinted with permission of the editor, Dawn Hill (see Attachment A).

Other state and federal resource guides are available through your local library.

Cooperative Extension

In every Wyoming county, residents have access to a wealth of resources and expertise made available through a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of Wyoming representing the Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For almost eight decades the educational programs based on research and knowledge provided by land grant colleges and universities have helped local communities apply that research to everyday problems and decision making. In its redefined mission statement of the 90s, Cooperative Extension proposes to help people improve their lives through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs. Those issues and needs tend to be local in orientation and practical in application. Extension's community-based educational programming focuses on lifelong learning skills relevant to the population it serves. Issue based programming emphasizes economic development, environmental concerns, and social change for communities. Extension agents located in the community work with citizens to identify issues and problems and serve as conduits for programming and resources to facilitate resolution of the issues. Some of the Extension issues closely connected to schools include parenting, early childhood development, youth education (in part through 4-H youth programs), youth developmental activities, latchkey children, professional development programs for teachers, community development, leadership skills, and many others.

The Wyoming program focus is currently in the following areas:

Human Capital and Economic Well-Being

Foods and Nutrition

Estate Planning

Investment Alternatives for Small Investors

Financial and Credit Counseling

Consumerism

Consumer Protection and Mediation Program

Clothing and Textiles

Families and Individuals in Transition

Pressures Facing Youth

Safety in Agriculture

Home Safety

Safety in 4-H

Leadership and Community

Community Assistance-Business Development

Leadership Development - L.E.A.D.

Family Community Leadership - FCL

Volunteer Development - VOW

Interagency Coord. and Public Relations

Is Anyone Listening?

4-H Leader Training and Retention

Donor Relationships

Economic Development

Business Planning and Development - Home-Based Business

Economics, Jobs, and Careers

International

Extension Organizational Development

Marketing Ext. - Program Planning, Development, and Organization

Agricultural Marketing and Profitability

Marketing Development/Alternatives

Crop Production and Management

Small Grains Production

Alfalfa Management and Marketing Improvements

Forage Production and Utilization

Seed Certification

Irrigated Meadow and Pasture Improvement

Sugarbeet Production

IPM

Irrigation Systems

Conservation Tillage

Grazing Lands and People

Rangeland Improvement

Integrated Resource Management (IRM)

4-H Livestock

Financial Management - Farm and Ranch

Economics of Livestock Production

Weed Control for Homes

Weed Control of Cropland

Pesticide Applicator Training

Pesticide Impact Assessment

Rangeland Weed Control

Yard and Garden Insect Control

Mosquito Control

Cooperative Extension is widely known for its distribution of state and federal information bulletins and flyers. A brochure listing all Wyoming publications titled Wyoming Farm, Ranch, and Home Publications (Bulletin number MP-7R) is available free from the UW Bulletin Room, P.O. Box 3313, Laramie, Wyoming 82071 (telephone: 766-2115).

The County Extension office in your community can provide additional information.

County Extension Offices

Albany County Courthouse, Room 203 Laramie, 82070	721-2571
Big Horn County Courthouse, P.O. Box 601 Basin, 82410 or 355 E. 5th Lovell, 82431	568-2278 548-7261
Campbell County 412 1/2 Gillette Avenue Gillette, 82716	682-7281
Carbon County Carbon Building, Box 280 Rawlins, 82301	328-2642
Converse County Courthouse, 107 N. 5th Douglas, 82633	358-2417

Crook County Courthouse, Box 368 Sundance, 82729	283-1192
Fremont County Courthouse, Box 470 Lander, 82520 or County Complex, Box 887 Riverton, 82501	332-5673 856-3343
Goshen County Research and Extension W. Hwy, Rt. 1, Box 373G Torrington, 82240	532-2436
Hot Springs County 328 Arapahoe Thermopolis, 82443	864-3421
Johnson County 762 Fetterman Buffalo, 82834	684-7522
Laramie County 1700 Snyder Cheyenne, 82001	638-4383 or 634-4415
Lincoln County Veterans Building, Box 309 Afton, 83110	886-3132
Natrona County 2011 Fairgrounds Rd. Casper, 82604	235-9400
Niobrara County Courthouse, Box 210 Lusk, 82225	334-3524
Park County Courthouse 1002 Sheridan Ave. P.O. Box 3099 Cody, 82414 or 655 E. 5th Powell, 82435	 587-2204 754-5733

Platte County
1851 Oak St.
Wheatland, 82201 322-3667

Sheridan County
224 S. Main, Suite B10
Sheridan, 82801 672-2733

Sublette County
Law Enforcement Center
Box 579
Pinedale, 82941 367-4380

Sweetwater County
Western Wyoming Community College
Room 1004
P.O. Box 428
Rock Springs, 82902 362-3461
or
Farson Building
P.O. Box 185
Farson, 82932 273-5534

Teton County
255 W. Deloney
Box 1708
Jackson, 83001 733-3087

Uinta County
228 9th St.
Evanston, 82930 789-3277

Washakie County
Library Complex, Box 609
Worland, 82401 347-3431

Weston County
Box 69, North Summit
Newcastle, 82701 746-3531

Wind River Reservation
37 Norkok St., Box 248
Ft. Washakie, 82514 332-2681

Libraries

The last community resource covered in this chapter is the libraries. Most libraries see their primary purpose as supporting citizenship and democracy by providing access to information and thereby fostering knowledge. Information and knowledge are then used by citizens to make informed decisions. Many libraries view themselves as lifelong learning centers for independent study.

While there are distinct types of libraries with different missions, most communities contain school and public libraries. The school library's mission is to support the curriculum and usually has resources limited to the provision of that support. The public library serves the needs of the entire community. Working together, these two local resources can provide a wealth of information and connections to academic and special libraries in the state and regional and national resources through library and information networks.

Because we are indeed living in the information age, educators and students alike need to become information literate. Breivik (1989, p. 24) defined information literacy as the "ability to effectively access and evaluate information for a given need. It includes an integrated set of skills (research strategy and evaluation) and knowledge of tools and resources." Educators and librarians working together can help students acquire these empowering skills for lifelong learning. Information technology has enabled libraries to provide even more access to sources. For instance, through a PC with a modem and telephone line, anyone in Wyoming can access CARL, the automated on-line catalog of the University of Wyoming.

CARL is a Valuable Resource Available State-Wide

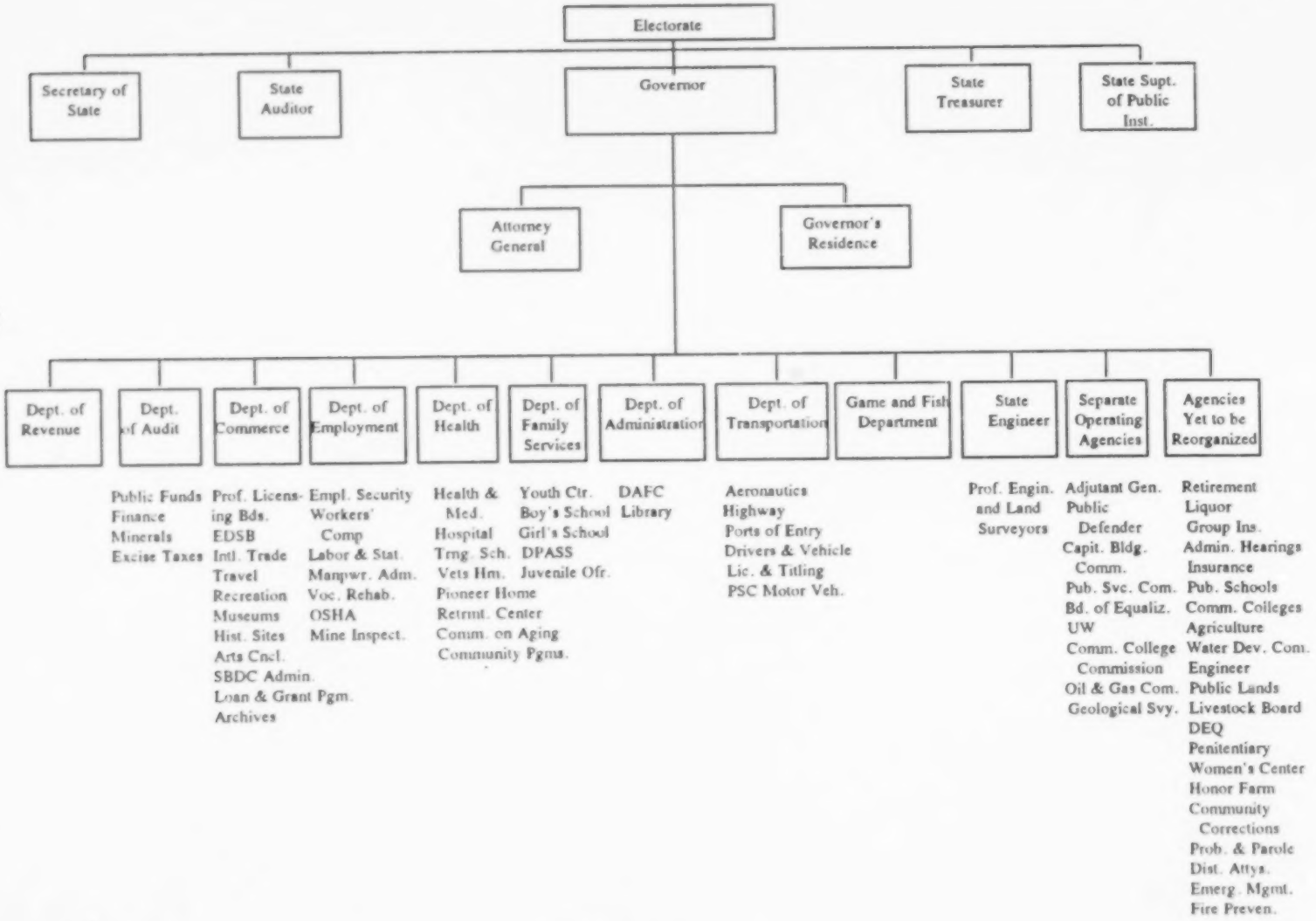
CARL contains UW holdings and the holdings of many other member libraries and can be searched by subject, author, or title. Another database on CARL is Uncover which contains some 10,000 journal titles. Users can look at the table of contents for current issues of those journals or search by subject for specific articles.

By working together with local school and public libraries, educators can open new worlds of information access and teach students the lifelong skill of how to find needed information. In addition to local librarians, the Wyoming State Library can provide information and connections to library resources:

Wyoming State Library
Supreme Court and State Library Building
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(telephone: 777-7283)

Each community has some specialized local resources too. Those might include a community college, the University of Wyoming, the Wyoming State Hospital, the State Penitentiary, the Law Enforcement Academy, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, proprietary schools, etc. Taking the time to look around your local community will reveal a wealth of resources readily available.

1991 Reorganization Chart



ATTACHMENT A

Involving the Community by Using Volunteers

by Dick Naumann

The days are gone when educators can afford to concern themselves only with students and parents. Financial resources are more difficult to obtain and confidence in public institutions may be at an all time low. Fewer adults have children in school. Serving the learning needs of students, and cultivating the support and cooperation of their parents, are no longer sufficient to establish and maintain public trust and support for the nation's schools.

Individuals need a personal relationship with a particular school or school district to understand and support it. The direct involvement of citizens who do not have children in the public schools in school volunteer programs can develop the public trust and satisfaction that can lead to evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, change in public education. Sophisticated public relations programs are not the answers to this dilemma. Effective school volunteer programs will strengthen support for schools and provide other benefits as well.

Benefits of Volunteer Programs

Schools, students, volunteers and the community can all benefit from school volunteer programs. The school district benefits by increased public awareness of, and support for, its programs. A variety of socioeconomic levels and social groups can be represented in a broad based program. As volunteers invest in the school district's mission and programs, they begin to serve as goodwill ambassadors among their friends and acquaintances throughout the community. (Etlinger & Ogletree, 1981).

The school district also benefits from the addition of volunteer personnel who

can serve a variety of needs at a very low cost. There is usually some degree of added costs for effective school volunteer programs, but they can significantly increase the general cost effectiveness of the instructional program (School Volunteer Program, 1980). Volunteers should not be seen as a source of cheap labor that can be used to replace paid employees (Amundson, 1991). Such a viewpoint is counterproductive in the end. Volunteers can best serve as resources that enable contracted employees to do their jobs better (Etlinger & Ogletree, 1981).

Increasing services to students should be the focus of a school volunteer program (Amundson, 1991). By working with individual students or small groups, volunteers can provide personal attention that would be unavailable otherwise (Barnett et al., 1985). Teachers can increase time to share their professional skills with individual students by using volunteers to help with group projects. The individual attention for students that can result from a school volunteer program is significant (School Volunteer Program, 1980).

Volunteers themselves benefit from involvement with the schools. The personal satisfaction of helping others is a major motivation factor for many volunteers. Volunteers can exercise skills and learn new skills through work in schools. Re-entry into the work force can be helped by volunteer experience (Goetter, 1987). As they become more involved with the schools and better informed about the nature of the schools' instructional mission and programs, volunteers can serve as an important source of information within the community.

Communities benefit from a more informed populace. Business and industry gain a long term advantage by the increased skill and knowledge level of students entering the work force (Etlinger & Ogletree, 1981). In as much as the schools can

provide better education for a small increase in expenses, the community gains an economic benefit.

These benefits and more can result from effective school volunteer programs. The characteristics of successful programs are well documented and can be replicated in other schools. Successful programs begin with genuine commitment and detailed planning.

Features of Volunteer Programs

Any volunteer program should contribute to the central mission of the organization (A Systems Approach, 1980). Programs that are superficial or manipulative will not be successful. Whether the program is being carried out at a single site or across many sites in a complex organization, the features necessary for successful application are the same. Features characteristic of effective volunteer programs include:

* thorough needs' assessment
* strong commitment at all levels
* clearly formulated goals and objectives
* centralized coordination
* clearly defined roles and responsibilities
* formal selection and assignment procedures
* orientation and training for all participants
* involving all stakeholders in program planning
* supervision of volunteers
* systematic communication and recognition
* continuous program evaluation and development.

(School Volunteer Programs, 1981; Barnett et al., 1985; Williams & Chavkin, 1989.)

Schools should identify what unmet needs exist before initiating a volunteer program (Angelis, 1990; Amundson, 1991). All members of the school family, teachers, students and parents, should be involved in the needs' assessment. The identified needs should be evaluated to decide which ones can realistically be addressed by a volunteer program. (Amundson, 1991)

An effective school volunteer program is the result of careful planning by committed leaders. From the outset, there must be a firm commitment by the school district administration and the school board (Barnett et al., 1985; Williams & Chavkin, 1989). This commitment must extend beyond philosophy and theory to include the allocation of time, personnel and finances resources. Planning is the key to a successful program (School Volunteer Programs, 1981; Amundson, 1991). One common characteristic of collapsed volunteer programs is a lack of planning and management by those administering the program (School Volunteer Programs, 1981).

Effective school volunteer programs are guided by well defined goals and objectives in much the same manner as an effective instructional program. All the stakeholders should be involved during the planning stages. This includes representatives from the school board, administration, teachers, community groups, local businesses, parents and students. The involvement of these groups in specifying goals and objectives for the program will greatly increase the likelihood of success. This steering committee should reconvene periodically to help with program evaluation and development.

The employment of a central coordinator is an important component (Williams & Dale, 1980; Barnett et al., 1985; Goetter, 1987). Descriptions of

successful district wide school volunteer programs typically refer to a general program coordinator as well as individual site coordinators. These coordinators may be paid or may serve as volunteers. They may work full or part-time. The critical factor is that someone with adequate time and authority is in charge of the project. Ultimate authority usually rests with principals although another person may serve as the building coordinator of volunteers (Goetter, 1987).

Two responsibilities of the coordinator are the communication of the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and the monitoring of volunteer performance. Successful programs ensure that volunteers, students, teachers, parents, and other staff have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities in the program (Setting Up the School Volunteer Program, 1985). Expectations should be clear and communication channels must be provided to negotiate misunderstandings before they become problematic.

Formal recruitment, screening, selection and assignment of volunteers are important (Amundson, 1991). Advertisement strategies designed to reach potential volunteers should be planned into the program. This requires the identification of potential sources of volunteers. Typical sources include senior citizens, college students, parents of preschoolers, members of civic clubs, business people, and other identifiable groups within the community.

Successful programs involve formal application, interview and screening procedures to identify individuals with potential for success (Amundson, 1991). Not all applicants will be well suited for the duties that the school requires. A thorough recruitment and screening process will provide information about individual volunteers that will simplify matching them with jobs for which they are suited

(Angelis, 1990).

Effective school volunteer programs provide orientation and training for volunteers, teachers, staff and students (Williams & Dale, 1980; Williams & Chavkin, 1989; Angelis, 1990). A general orientation will meet the informational needs of participants concerning the program and how it fits into the school district and building level programs. This may be accomplished in a session or two during the initial stages of involvement. More specific training will be needed to provide volunteers with attitudes, information and skills needed to fulfill their assigned volunteer duties. Training should continue throughout the program (Williams & Chavkin, 1989).

Teachers and students also need to be oriented to the volunteer program and trained to relate to, and interact with, the volunteers (Setting Up the School Volunteer Program, 1985; Armengal, 1992). It is important that teachers be given the option of using volunteers or not. The genuine commitment of the teacher to work with a volunteer is so critical to the success of that volunteer that assignment should only be made at the request of the teacher (Goetter, 1987; Amundson, 1991).

Representatives of all the stakeholders should be involved in program planning. Ownership is enhanced by involvement in decision making. In organizations it is a mistake to ask people to be involved and then exclude them from the decision-making and evaluation process (DePree, 1989). Volunteers, administrators, teachers, students and parents should have continuing responsibility for planning and evaluating the program.

The supervision and evaluation of volunteers within the school setting are important. Although they need not be extremely sophisticated and complex,

supervision and evaluation procedures are reported as vital to the complete success of the program (McClarn, 1985; Angelis, 1990). Effective volunteer programs include provisions to insure that these activities take place. When the previously noted characteristics of successful volunteer programs are met, supervision and evaluation are more easily accomplished.

Volunteers need to know who serves as their supervisor so that they may come to that person for information, clarification and problem solving (Allen, 1987). Evaluation can be accomplished largely through self appraisal and discussion with the supervisor. Supervision can be provided either by a district employee or a specially trained volunteer depending on the structure of the program.

Personal recognition and thanks from those most closely associated with the volunteers' activities are helpful in maintaining their interest and involvement. Volunteers report a wide range of motivations for giving of their time and energy (McClarn, 1985). Program leaders need to determine the motivations that are most important to their volunteers and institute appropriate recognition activities. Recognition can be a simple person to person expression of thanks or an elaborate system of certificates, plaques and social events designed to honor volunteers publicly.

The nature of the recognition activities should be in keeping with the nature of the volunteer program itself (McClarn, 1985). Small, single site programs may be well served by personal expressions of appreciation, letters of thanks from coordinators or school board members, and notes from students and staff. Larger programs may require more elaborate schemes that might include free or reduced admission to school sporting and cultural events, appreciation dinners, plaques, lapel

pins, reduced or free tuition to community education courses, and public announcements in the media. Whatever the size or sophistication of the program, the contributions of volunteers should be recognized and celebrated (Williams & Dale, 1980).

Formal program evaluation is critical to the success of volunteer programs. Program evaluation is important in adjusting and improving the program over time (Allen, 1987; Williams & Chavin, 1989). Evaluation procedures should be developed along with the initial identification of goals and objectives in the early planning stages of the volunteer program. Those goals and objectives should be the basis for program evaluation. It is also recommended that all participant groups have input (Allen, 1987; Angelis, 1990). Surveys of volunteers, teachers, staff, students and parents are commonly used. Records of volunteer service hours and types of duty are sometimes included as evaluation data (Setting Up the School Volunteer Program, 1985; Goetter, 1987). The analysis of the data generated by these, and similar activities, should be a shared responsibility (Allen, 1987; Angelis, 1990).

Summary

School volunteer programs come in all shapes and sizes. Some are single site programs with a few volunteers who work to meet a specific need. Others are multiple site programs with central office coordination of a variety of volunteer activities throughout the school district. Volunteers can represent all facets of the community including senior citizens, parents of preschoolers, business people, members of civic clubs, college students, and others. These volunteers may represent every economic level from welfare recipients to the very affluent.

Whatever the nature of the volunteers involved and the tasks they perform,

all successful programs have several characteristics in common. Effective programs are developed by committed individuals who are willing to undertake the planning and organization necessary to sustain and improve a program to meet genuine needs within the schools.

School volunteer programs can benefit all members of the school community on a cost effective basis. The ultimate value of school volunteer programs may be the potential for meaningful involvement of all segments of the community in school affairs. The increased trust and support for schools that can result represents a positive step toward restructuring the way schools operate and serve society.

Reflecting Community Diversity in the School

by Caroline Sherritt

The American Way

American schools have always served culturally diverse students. In the past two decades, however, student diversity has proliferated. The *types* of differences as well as the sheer *numbers* of students representing them will continue to multiply. In the venerable one-room school, teachers could expect their student bodies to reflect religious and ethnic minorities, extremes of wealth and poverty, and differing learning abilities. These types of students continue to fill our schools but are joined by newly emerging groups.

Demographic Changes

Changing Immigration Patterns

* Immigrants in early schools derived largely from European countries with which Americans shared a cultural heritage. In the 1980s, Asia and South America replaced Europe as the leading sources of immigrants and refugees to the United States (U. S. Census, 1989). Immigrants in our communities today are likely to come from cultures which are different from the dominant culture of earlier times.

* Families with children represent the fastest growing homeless group in the United States. In some shelters, families represent over 50 percent of inhabitants. No community is immune from this phenomenon. In 1988, Reston, Virginia, an affluent suburb, turned away 1,000 people from its new community shelter. One-fourth of its 80 beds were taken by children (Hodgkinson, 1989, p. 7).

* Children with acquired and inherited drug dependencies and incapacitated

with fetal alcohol syndrome are part of the 90s plurality.

* At a time when 70 million baby boomers are reaching middle-age and stretching the resources of social services, 21 percent of all children are poor and the rate among African-American children is a shocking 48 percent (Stern, 1987).

* In 1989, 8.6 percent of babies were born to unmarried teens (NSPRA, 1992), and in 1988 over four million Americans worked full-time but were eligible for poverty benefits (Hodgkinson, 1989).

* Little is known about the origin of learning disabilities. Possibly, there were youngsters in one-room schools with dyslexia, perceptual disorders, or attention span deficits. Such learners, if they did exist, were not sufficient in numbers to drain school resources at a time when drop-outs could hope to earn a living. Whatever the history of learning disorders, their prevalence among school children today cannot be ignored.

* Juvenile gangs, though not a serious problem in America's heartland, nonetheless a new and depressing problem for urban schools.

* Indigenous minority grops (African and Native Americans and Hispanics) have never been well served by mainstream education but, given their relatively small numbers and lack of political influence, this problem was rarely addressed in early schools. Today we know that people of color are the fastest growing groups in our population. Future students are likely to evolve largely from indigenous minority groups. California already has a majority minority population in the public schools, as do the ten largest school districts in America.

Labor Force Entrants

* Women and minorities, two groups poorly served by mainstream education in the past, represent the largest numbers of new entrants into the labor force (Johnson and Packer, 1992). This phenomenon will continue into the next century, creating concern about the education of girls, particularly in science and mathematics, and minorities at a time when America faces her most critical economic threat from abroad.

Different Family Structures

* American family structures are changing. For example, the numbers of latchkey children (children unsupervised in the home after school) has proliferated in the past decade. There are more single-parent families, more blended families, and more mothers in the work force. All of these trends portend changes in student composition.

* Children with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) bring unique challenges to community schools. Virtually unknown before 1982, these youngsters, though still few in number, illustrate the unpredictable changes apparent in schools today.

* Japanese-American businesses have become a social force in many communities. In Dublin, Ohio, for example, where a Honda plant was located in the early 80s, Japanese executives and their families presented new mandates to community leaders.

The Melting Pot Myth

More Children at Risk

In summary, although American students have always been somewhat diverse, newly identified groups with special needs appear on community horizons every year. Heretofore, these groups either did not exist or were so low in numbers that they did not stretch community educational resources. Such groups, however, are no longer peering through the windows of our schools; they are breaking down the doors. What does this mean for community education? Clearly, there are and will continue to be more children at risk of school failure than ever before in the nation's history.

The "melting pot" theory which sought to assimilate cultural identities into one cauldron, ever worked for some groups and is less likely to be effective now. It is essential for communities to openly acknowledge the extraordinary human differences which exist in our schools. The issue of plurality transcends nationalities and ethnic affiliation. The heterogeneity of American communities reflects many identities. No town or city, however small, is immune from this striking plurality. Education is one arena from which response to diversity is absolutely necessary. If the United States is to be strong at a time when global interdependence and competition are proliferating, all communities must seek and support policies and practices which educate all students and model tolerance for every group.

A Mandate for Communities

Joseph Campbell (1989) wrote that for four-thousand years, human beings lived within boundaries of clan, religion, state, nation, family, and ethnicity. All

could afford to represent those outside their boundaries as deficient. For the first time in the history of humankind, these affiliations are not sufficient to make one group or another successful.

Global Interdependence

It is an interdependent world. The wage rate in Singapore affects the minimum wage in Minneapolis; the Japanese prop up our economy and we support theirs; American hegemony abroad is waning; the Pacific rim has become an economic force to reckon with and the European common market represents yet more competition. How are communities to cope with such massive world changes unless their education systems rest on reality?

Reality is that the United States is more culturally diverse than ever before, which can be a strength or a weakness depending on how it is handled. Types of plurality vary from one region to the next, making communities the ideal nexus for change. The matter of human differences is an educational issue.

Communities as a Nexus for Change

Community leaders must not be content to dream of halcyon days when American education was the best in the world but must support new practices. The nature of students has changed, world political and economic orders have changed, and the role of communities has changed. It is a mistake to believe that new problems can be fixed with old solutions. Responding to cultural differences means restructuring public schools.

Public Schools

For too long American schools have operated for a so-called normal population of white, middle class children whose developmental cycles coalesce. Students who do not fit the mold are quickly (usually by third grade) labeled as

failures, making it very likely that they will never succeed in school. By these standards, there are now entire school districts where every single child is at risk.

Effective Schools

The business of sorting, selecting, and labeling students is pernicious. Achievement in school, unfortunately, has as much to do with what students perceive is expected of them as any other variable. Specifically, students who get the message that they are failures are likely to be failures. Edmunds (quoted in Dash, 1988) said, "There has never been a time in the life of the American public school when we have not known all we needed in order to teach all those whom we choose to teach. What has historically been lacking, no less today than in the past, is the commitment and will to choose to teach all the children who enter our nation's schools" (p. 27).

Diversity as the Norm

Effectively educating all children requires a solid belief that all children can be educated. Heretofore, the lowest functioning students were deemed impossible to teach while resources were diverted to so-called normal children. Today, whole districts are comprised of low functioning students; the so-called normal children are not sufficient in number to guarantee the survival of the nation and we can no longer afford to ignore those students who are failed by the system. *There are no bodies of normal children, only groups representing the full spectrum of human condition. Diversity is integral to any group of students, particularly in the United States; students with unique learning needs are not an anomaly.*

Developing a Belief System

> Before success comes in any man's life, he is sure to meet with much temporary defeat, and, perhaps, some failure. When defeat overtakes a man,

the easiest and most logical thing to do is to quit. That is exactly what the majority of men do.

Napolean Hill

An essential component for collaborative development of public schools is a mission statement that "embraces the philosophy that the school is committed to all students...that affirms human diversity, that validates the history and culture of all ethnic groups, that is based on high expectations for academic success for all students, and that encourages students' active participation in school" (Benard, 1991, p. 11). It is doubtful that any school will deliver quality education to all children unless it makes this task a joyful, encompassing, growth producing, controlling purpose.

Model Programs

The prognosis for schools is not all grim. While no one knows with certainty what successful schools of the future will look like, several communities have taken a pro-active stance toward defining them. In Transylvania County, North Carolina, community problems included poverty, illiteracy, a scattered system of social services which were difficult to access, programs spread around a rural area and not centralized, and little collaboration between schools and social service agencies.

Community and School Collaboration

These problems were addressed in a holistic manner with the "Cities in Schools" program designed to address dropouts. The program "brings representatives from businesses, social service agencies, human resource systems, and volunteer groups into the schools to help at-risk students and their families. Cities in Schools centralizes services and eliminates the problem of families having to navigate a maze of bureaucratic and often overlapping service delivery system"

(Nations Cities Weekly, 1991, p. 6).

Understanding that the seeds of failure are planted early, the Pasadena Unified School District developed a model program for working with four-year-olds. The program was designed to provide early intervention and to make wide use of an advisory committee representing a cross-section of the community (Klentschy, 1990). The Luther Burbank District in California developed a school and community counseling program in 1987, linking schools and social service agencies to address the dropout problem. This initiative supported the view that "when only one dimension of what affects a child is working toward improvement of the whole child, little progress can be realized. However, when a multi-dimensional support system is in place, potential for success is enhanced substantially" (Foley and Engleman, 1990, p. 4). An innovative program in DeBeque, Colorado (1992) involved students in community planning. The mayor, Dennis LeTurgez, believes in "teamwork and cooperation between all entities, including school, county, town, and the business community" (Colorado Municipalities, 1992, p. 31).

In Dublin, Ohio, community leaders responded favorably to the changes inherent in the building of a Honda factory in their area. The adult education program in this formerly quiet, middle-class suburb was expanded to include classes in Japanese and English. School buildings were used for weekend classes for the children of displaced Japanese business executives. Cultural exchanges were encouraged. The introduction of a large number of Japanese into the community enriched rather than depleted community resources and Dublin is now an affluent and highly desirable place to live, recognized for its outstanding public schools.

Conclusions

In sum, American schools are becoming more diverse, creating challenges never before experienced. Cultural plurality, including ethnic, socio-economic, disability, and gender status, differs from one region to another making communities close to the heartbeat of change. There remains a lethargy and confusion in many regions about how to cope with the enormous stress being placed on school districts and social service agencies because of human differences. Nonetheless, some progressive communities have taken a pro-active approach to cultural plurality. Successful approaches which address diversity are idiosyncratic (reflecting community exigencies) but emphasize at least the following components:

Progressive Communities

1. collaborative development of a clear belief system which respects the nature of and demands excellence for all students;

Components of School-Community Cooperation

2. use of an inclusive belief system as a guiding focus for school and community and a joyful, learning experience for all citizens;
3. intervention strategies for at-risk students which involve community agencies, businesses, and constituents in creative cooperative ventures;
4. a globalized curriculum which not only acknowledges the value of differences but which also teaches people how to live in a heterogeneous, interdependent world;

Breaking Down the Barriers

5. a holistic approach to instruction where whole children are educated in whole class rooms and are never labeled, sorted, or selected for preferment.

The barriers between school success and individual differences are a confection of an earlier time. They are and always have been artificial. The barriers between community and school are also artificial. It will take the combined resources and goodwill of all citizens to address the immensely complex issues of plurality in the schools.

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